



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**CONSERVATION AND DIVERSITY OF HEMPEDU BUMI  
(ANDROGRAPHIS PANICULATA NEES) GERMPLASM IN MALAYSIA**

**MELAKU ADDISU BIFFA**

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**CONSERVATION AND DIVERSITY OF HEMPEDU BUMI (*Andrographis  
paniculata* Nees) GERMPLASM IN MALAYSIA**

**By**

**MELAKU ADDISU BIFFA**

**Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree  
of Master of Agricultural Science in the Faculty of Agriculture  
Universiti Putra Malaysia**

**November 2003**



## **DEDICATION**

Dedicated to my wife Ayesha Muhidin, my daughter Hawi Melaku, my mother Aberash G/Mariam and my father Addisu Biffa.

Abstract of the thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Agricultural Science

**CONSERVATION AND DIVERSITY OF HEMPEDU BUMI (*Andrographis paniculata* Nees) GERMPLASM IN MALAYSIA**

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**November 2003**

**Chairman: Associate Professor Mohd Said Saad, PhD**

**Faculty: Agriculture**

*Andrographis paniculata*, a member of *Accantaceae* family, is a soft wooded herbaceous plant having multiple uses in traditional as well as pharmacological (modern) medicine. Collection was carried out on *A. paniculata* germplasm from Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Perak states of Peninsular Malaysia. The objectives of the study were to conserve *A. paniculata* germplasm from different agroecological conditions of Peninsular Malaysia, to analyze variability and rationalize the germplasm accessions using agro-morphological traits and to evaluate the germplasm and thereby identify promising genotypes.

As noticed during the collection activity, the habitat preference of the plant was wide. The ranges of habitats include neglected fields invaded with noxious weeds, rocky and poor soil conditions and backyard of houses in villages.

Of the total 38 accessions collected, 26 were evaluated in the field using Randomized Complete Block Design in three replications. The coefficient of variation values for most of the quantitative morphological characters were generally moderate. Moreover, the qualitative traits such as mature and immature leaf color, leaf shape, plant growth habit and stem color showed the presence of different types within the germplasm studied.

Cluster analysis done on 26 accessions showed the presence of four distinct groups. However, this grouping pattern did not show parallelism between the geographical and genetic diversity. The result generally showed the existence of similar genotypes in all of the three states considered under this study.

Principal component analysis showed the first two axes represent 66.67% of the total variation that identified the importance of flowering date, shoot fresh weight, root fresh weight, leaf dry weight, stem dry weight, root dry weight and root volume towards genetic divergence. The first axis was able to differentiate the first two groups from the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> groups from the cluster analysis.

Heritability values revealed high to moderate for flowering date, shoot fresh weight, root dry weight, root fresh weight, branch length, root volume, plant height, leaf dry weight and leaf width.

The association between morphological characters showed strong positive correlation between flowering time and most of the vegetative characters. Significant and negative correlation was obtained between flowering time and plant height, branch length and internode length.

The result of this study revealed that five accessions, namely; 11549, 11300, 11284, 11261 and 11233, had promising potential for the production of high shoot and root biomass.

Abstrak tesis diserahkan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains Pertanian.

**PENGEKALAN DAN KEPELBAGAIAN GERMPLASMA HEMPEDU BUMI  
(*Andrographis paniculata* Nees) DI MALAYSIA**

**Oleh**

**MELAKU ADDISU BIFFA**

**November 2003**

**Pengerusi : Profesor Madya Mohd Said Saad, PhD**

**Fakulti : Pertanian**

*Andrographis paniculata*, dari famili *Accantaceae*, merupakan tumbuhan herba berkayu lembut yang mempunyai pelbagai kegunaan tradisional dan moden terutamanya dalam bidang perubatan farmakologi. Koleksi germplasma *A. paniculata* telah dikumpulkan dari tiga negeri di Semenanjung Malaysia, iaitu Selangor, Negeri Sembilan dan Perak. Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk menganalisa variasi genetik pada spesis tumbuhan tersebut, serta mengenalpasti kepelbagaian germplasma dengan menggunakan ciri-ciri agronomi dan morfologi bagi menentukan genotip yang berkualiti.

Semasa melaksanakan aktiviti pengumpulan germplasma, didapati bahawa habitat kesesuaiannya adalah amat luas. Antara kawasan-kawasan yang diperhatikan termasuklah lapangan-lapangan terbiar yang telah ditumbuhi

rumpai-rumpai di kawasan tanah yang berbatu dan kurang subur di halaman rumah-rumah kampung. Sejumlah 38 sampel telah dikumpul, dan 26 daripadanya diuji diladang menggunakan Rekabentuk Blok Lengkap Rawak dengan tiga replikasi. Keputusan koefisien variasi hasil pemerhatian sifat-sifat kuantitatif menunjukkan kehadiran variasi yang sederhana. Sifat-sifat kualitatif seperti warna daun matang, warna daun belum matang, bentuk daun, corak pertumbuhan pokok dan warna batang didapati menunjukkan kehadiran sifat pelbagai jenis dalam germplasma yang dikaji.

Analisis kluster telah dibuat ke atas 26 aksesori menunjukkan kehadiran empat kumpulan yang berbeza. Walau bagaimanapun, kumpulan ini tidak menunjukkan persamaan di antara geografi dan kepelbagaian genetik. Secara umumnya, keputusan yang diperolehi mengenai kewujudan persamaan genotip dalam kesemua tiga negeri masih lagi didalam kajian.

Analisis komponen utama menunjukkan dua paksi yang pertama mewakili 66.67% jumlah variasi yang mengenal pasti kepentingan masa pembungaan, berat bersih pucuk, berat bersih akar, berat kering daun, berat kering stem, berat kering akar dan isipadu akar terhadap perbezaan genetik. Paksi pertama berupaya membezakan dua kumpulan yang pertama daripada kumpulan ketiga dan keempat daripada analisis kluster.



Nilai heritabiliti luas menunjukkan julat antara tinggi hingga sederhana bagi waktu pembungaan, berat basah pucuk, berat kering akar, berat basah akar, panjang batang, isipadu akar, panjang pokok, berat kering daun dan lebar daun.

Perhubungan di antara sifat-sifat morfologi tersebut menunjukkan korelasi yang tinggi antara waktu pembungaan dengan kebanyakan sifat-sifat yang lain, manakala korelasi negatif diperolehi antara waktu pembungaan dengan ketinggian pokok, panjang batang dan panjang antara ruas.

Keputusan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa lima aksesori, iaitu 11549, 11300, 11284, 11261 dan 11233, mempunyai potensi yang terbiak untuk penghasilan biomassa pucuk dan akar yang tinggi.

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I certify that an examination committee met on 20 November 2003 to conduct the final examination of Melaku Addisu Biffa on his Master of Agricultural Science thesis entitled "Conservation and Diversity of *Andrographis paniculata* Nees Germplasm in Malaysia" in accordance with Universiti Putra Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

**Midzhar Abdul Kadir, PhD**

Lecturer  
Faculty of Agriculture  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Chairman)

**Mohd Rafi Yusop, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Faculty of Agriculture  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Member)

**Saleh Kadzimin, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Faculty of Agriculture  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Member)

**Abdul Rahman Milan, PhD**

Malaysian Agricultural Research  
and Development Institute  
(Independent Examiner)



**GULAM RUSUL RAHMAT ALI, PhD**

Professor/Deputy Dean  
School of Graduate Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: 19 DEC 2003

This thesis submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Agricultural Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee are as follows:

**Mohd Said Saad, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Faculty of Agriculture  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Chairman)

**Ghizan Saleh, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Faculty of Agriculture  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Member)

**Abdul Ghani Yunus, PhD**

Associate Professor  
Faculty of Agriculture  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
(Member)



**AINI IDERIS, PhD**

Professor/Dean  
School of Graduate Studies  
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: 8 JAN 2024

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for the quotations and citations, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted to any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

  
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MELAKU ADDISU BIFFA

Date: 9 DEC 2003

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page	
DEDICATION -----	ii
ABSTRACT -----	iii
ABSTRAK -----	vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS -----	ix
APPROVAL -----	x
DECLARATION -----	xii
LIST OF TABLES -----	xv
LIST OF FIGURES -----	xvii
LIST OF APPENDICES -----	xix

## CHAPTER

1	INTRODUCTION -----	1
2	LITERATURE REVIEWS -----	4
2.1	Botany of <i>Andrographis paniculata</i> -----	4
2.2	Origin and Distribution -----	5
2.3	Chemical Composition -----	6
2.4	Medicinal Uses -----	7
2.5	Ethenobotanical or Traditional Uses -----	11
2.6	Importance of Medicinal Plants -----	13
2.7	Erosion of Medicinal Plants -----	15
2.8	Traditional Knowledge in Modern Medicine -----	16
2.9	Conservation of Medicinal Plants -----	19
3	MATERIALS AND METHODS -----	22
3.1	Collection Site -----	22
3.2	Germplasm Collection -----	22
3.3	Germplasm Conservation -----	27
3.4	Characterization and Evaluation of Accessions -----	28
3.4.1	Materials -----	28
3.4.2	Field Layout and Experimental Design -----	28
3.4.3	Agronomic Practices and Field Management -----	30
3.4.4	Data Collection -----	30
3.5	Data analyses -----	36
3.5.1	Mean, Variance and Coefficient of Variation -----	36
3.5.2	Analysis of Variance -----	36
3.5.3	Frequency Distribution -----	37
3.5.4	Correlation -----	37
3.5.5	Principal Component Analysis -----	37



3.5.6	Cluster Analysis	37
3.5.7	Heritability	38
<b>4</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>40</b>
4.1	Germplasm Collection	40
4.2	Local names of <i>A. paniculata</i>	40
4.3	Ecology of <i>A. paniculata</i>	43
4.4	Agro-morphological Variation	43
4.2.1	Quantitative Characters	43
4.4.2	Qualitative Characters	47
4.5	Grouping of Accessions	50
4.6	Principal Component Analysis	54
4.7	Agronomic Evaluation	60
4.8	Heritability	64
4.9	Association between Characters	64
<b>5</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>73</b>
5.1	Germplasm Collection and Conservation	73
5.2	Agro-morphological Variation	73
5.3	Agronomic Performance	76
5.4	Heritability	77
5.5	Association between Characters	78
<b>6</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>79</b>
	<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>81</b>
	<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>89</b>
	<b>BIODATA OF AUTHOR</b>	<b>97</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 List of biological activities of <i>A. paniculata</i> Nees -----	8
2 Uses of <i>A. paniculata</i> in traditional medicine in different countries -----	12
3 Location details of which <i>A. paniculata</i> germplasm were collected from Peninsular Malaysia -----	23
4 Analysis of variance (ANOVA) key out, for accession effects of each trait in the study -----	39
5 Number of <i>A. paniculata</i> germplasm accessions collected, dead and survived -----	41
6 Local names of <i>A. paniculata</i> in the different districts/regions of Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Perak states of Malaysia -----	42
7 Overall mean, range and coefficient of variation for 14 traits in 26 <i>A. paniculata</i> accessions collected from Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Perak, Malaysia -----	46
8 Mean values of 14 morphological characters for the 4 groups revealed by cluster analysis on 26 accessions of <i>A. paniculata</i> collected from Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Perak, Malaysia ----	53
9 Distribution of <i>A. paniculata</i> germplasm, as revealed by cluster analysis, in the states of Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Perak, Malaysia -----	55
10 Principal component analysis of characters associated with 26 <i>A. paniculata</i> accessions showing eigenvalues and proportion of variation associated with the first seven axes -----	56
11 Component loadings of the first two principal components axes for fourteen quantitative traits in 26 <i>A. paniculata</i> accessions -----	57
12 Mean squares from ANOVA for morphological traits measured on twenty-six accessions of <i>Andrographis paniculata</i> from Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Perak, Malaysia -----	61





13	Mean values for morphological traits measured on 26 accessions of <i>A. paniculata</i> from Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Perak, Malaysia -----	63
14	Promising accessions of <i>A. paniculata</i> selected for their potential for high shoot fresh weight and dry weight production -----	65
15	Genotypic and phenotypic variance and heritability values for agronomic traits in <i>A. paniculata</i> accessions -----	66
16	Simple correlation coefficients (r values) between 14 morphological traits in 26 <i>A. paniculata</i> accessions from Malaysia -----	68

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 Map of Selangor showing the sites of <i>A. paniculata</i> germplasm collection -----	24
2 Map of Negeri Sembilan showing the site of <i>A. paniculata</i> germplasm collection -----	25
3 Map of Perak showing the sites of <i>A. paniculata</i> germplasm collection -----	26
4 Field planting of 26 <i>A. paniculata</i> accessions at Field 2 of UPM ----	29
5 <i>A. paniculata</i> plant grown in pot and kept around the house for medicinal use in Selangor -----	44
6 <i>A. paniculata</i> plant growing with noxious weeds in neglected areas in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia -----	44
7 <i>A. paniculata</i> plant growing in stoney and poorly fertile soil in Perak, Malaysia -----	45
8 <i>A. paniculata</i> plant growing under the shade of a tree in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia -----	45
9 Frequency distribution of a) mature leaf color, b) immature leaf color and d) leaf shape in 26 accessions of <i>A. paniculata</i> from Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Perak, Malaysia -----	48
10 Frequency distribution of a) plant growth habit and b) stem color in 26 accessions of <i>A. paniculata</i> from Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Perak, Malaysia -----	49
11 Dendrogram from cluster analysis using 14 growth characters on 26 accessions of <i>A. paniculata</i> collected from Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Perak, Malaysia -----	51
12 Scatter plot of 26 <i>A. paniculata</i> accessions on the first two-PC axes of principal component analysis -----	59
13 Association between flowering date and fresh weight yield (root & shoot) in 26 accessions of <i>A. paniculata</i> from Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Perak, Malaysia -----	71



14	Association between flowering date and dry weight yield (root & shoot) in 26 accessions of <i>A. paniculata</i> from Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Perak, Malaysia -----	71
15	Association between flowering date and root volume for the 26 accessions of <i>A. paniculata</i> from Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Perak, Malaysia -----	72

## LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix	Page
A     Germplasm collecting format -----	89
B     Background information of <i>A. paniculata</i> accessions collected form Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Perak, Malaysia ----	90
C     Characterization data for <i>A. paniculata</i> (Qantitative characters) ----	93
D     Characterization data for <i>A. paniculata</i> (Qualitative characters) -----	94
E     Euclidean distant coefficient from cluster analysis in 26 accessions of <i>A. paniculata</i> -----	95
F     Chemical Compounds of <i>Andrographis paniculata</i> -----	96



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

According to Christoph (2000), there are more than 250,000 species of flowering plants world wide, of which about 150,000 species are found in the tropics. About 6,000 of the tropical species have been reported to possess medicinal properties, of which 21% have been recorded in Malaysia as plants used in traditional medicine, where *Andrographis paniculata* is one of them.

Despite its enormous medicinal and economic importance, attempts to cultivate *A. paniculata* have seldom been undertaken in Malaysia, in particular, and in most parts of the world. However, systematic cultivation have been experimented especially in India (Gupta and Srivastava, 1995) and South east Asia (Zhou, 1987; Ramesh *et al.*, 1997; Alagesaboopathi and Balu, 1997; Nandi, 1992; Muniramappa *et al.*, 1997). It should be noted here that even basic biological data are lacking in this economically valuable species, as is also the case with many other medicinal plants. The involvement of *A. paniculata* in research work and breeding programs for genetic improvement has not been fully realized until recently. There is little information on the genetics of the plant, and the biotic and abiotic factors under its ecological habitat, and germplasm characterization and evaluation data for adaptive traits relevant to specific agronomic or medicinal goals. Consequently very little attempt has been made to identify potential cultivars for medicinal purposes from within the species.

Since the early years, Malaysians have been using the leaves, roots, stems and fruits as ingredients in the preparation of traditional medicine. However, scientific information on medicinal values of the plants is lacking. Documentation on the use of the plants could provide an alternative method for effective and sustainable utilization of resources (Henry, 1923; Mohamed and Mustefa, 1994).

*Andrographis paniculata*, introduced from India, is known locally in most parts of Malaysia, as 'Hempedu bumi'. However, several other names are being used by the local people under different areas of the country. It grows as a wild plant in the open fields but at times planted specially for medicinal purposes to treat hypertension, diabetes, flu and fever among other uses (Kirtikar and Basu, 1975; Robert and Henry, 1980; Mohamed and Mustefa, 1994).

References on genetic variations among medicinal plants are lacking although analysis of such variations hold great promise owing to the location specific attributes of the herbs and the diversity in plant specific compounds of therapeutic and industrial value. It is understood that loss of genetic variations within a given species (genetic depletion) is usually much more serious and occurs earlier than the total extinction of the species itself. The only solution proposed to this rapid exhaustion of diversity is selection and cultivation of promising genotypes.

The present study was undertaken with the following objectives;

- 1 To conserve *A. paniculata* germplasm from different agroecological conditions of Peninsular Malaysia.
- 2 To analyze variability and rationalize the germplasm accessions using agro-morphological traits.
- 3 To evaluate the germplasm and thereby identify promising genotypes.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Botany of *Andrographis paniculata*

*Andrographis paniculata* is a softwooded herbaceous plant belonging to the *Acanthaceae* family. According to Sabu (2002), the genus *Andrographis* consists of 28 species of small annual shrubs essentially distributed in tropical Asia. Only a few species are medicinal, of which *A. paniculata* is the most popular. As outlined by various scientists (Christoph, 2000; Kirtikar and Basu, 1975; Mohamed and Mustefa, 1994; Robert and Henry, 1980), this plant species, in general, has stem of about 30-90cm high, erect, stiff thickened at the lower nodes, quadrangular with the angles slightly winged, smooth, with numerous long divaricats branches. The leaves are opposite, tapering at both ends especially at the base of the petiole, smooth and dark green above but much paler beneath. It produces numerous small flowers, distantly arranged singly or in pairs in a somewhat unilateral manner along the upper side of elongated, arching or slender branches, the whole forming a very wide-spreading, much branched pyramidal paniculate inflorescence. There are two stamens inserted in the throat of the corolla. The filaments are flattened and hairy in the upper part. The anther and the ovary are two celled. The fruits are 0.5 to 1 inch long and acute at both ends and seeds are numerous (6-10 per capsule), glabrous with yellowish brown color.



In the study conducted by Sabu (2002) on the breeding behavior of the plant, both manual selfing and bagging experiments indicated self compatibility of *A. paniculata*. Bagging experiment showed a mean fruit set value of 56.7% under conditions of limited chance for external stimuli (e.g. wind) which could otherwise establish effective contact between stigma and anthers. Manual selfing, netting and open pollination resulted in about 72% fruit set. The bagging experiment was performed on the corridor of the lab to avoid falling of rainwater on the plant. Other experimental plants were grown in the field plot where there was enough natural wind to agitate the plants. The favorable effect of wind on pollination was further confirmed by indoor pollination experiments. When plants were kept in a room where the windows were closed and the fans switched off, there was only 10.8% fruit set. An experiment carried out by same author at the same time indicated that the germination of freshly harvested seeds was negligible (<5%). However, after a period of 3-4 month storage, 85-95% germination was recorded. The reason behind this fact was reported to be due to high moisture content of freshly harvested seeds.

## **2.2 Origin and Distribution**

*Andrographis paniculata* is distributed in tropical Asian countries often in isolated patches. It can be found in a variety of habitats viz. plains, hill slopes, wastelands, farm, dry or wet lands, seashore and even roadsides. Native